

Rider Magazine Guide for Editorial Contributors

INTRODUCTION

If you wish to contribute articles and photos to Rider magazine, here are some guidelines to help you succeed. Whether you're a writing pro or a reader with an idea that you feel would be fun to share, please keep the following in mind:

Rider is written for the most mature, affluent and discerning readers in motorcycling. They are mostly experienced motorcycle enthusiasts. Rider readers are demanding critics; that's why many of the manuscripts we receive are rejected. The articles we do buy often share the following characteristics:

1. The writer queried us in advance to see if we needed or wanted the story. **Be sure to include YOUR email address so we can reply.** You can email a duplicate of your letter if you like, and if you have any questions email: rider@ridermagazine.com.
2. The story was well written and of proper length.
3. The story had sharp, uncluttered photos taken with a high-quality digital camera—Rider does not buy stories without photos.

Sound simple? It is if you have good creative writing skills and the know-how to take sharp, well-composed photographs.

WHY THE IMPERSONAL REJECTION SLIP?

A rejection slip usually says something like, "Thank you for submitting your manuscript. Unfortunately, it does not meet our needs at this time." It means just that. It also means that we just don't have enough time to explain your rejection in a detailed personal letter. It doesn't mean that we didn't bother to read the manuscript or look at the photos. Most important, it doesn't mean that we don't like you, because we do! All manuscripts, even the unsolicited ones, are read by Rider's top staffers.

AIM BEFORE YOU SHOOT; QUERY BEFORE YOU WRITE!

It happens all the time. A Rider reader takes a great tour or has what he or she thinks is a unique story idea, bangs out a story the size of a novel, pays no attention to our photography requirements and sends the whole disorganized mess off to Rider. The package is certain to be rejected.

Your chances will improve if you query Rider in advance. Write us a short note explaining your story idea. We may have already accepted a similar story, in which case we can't buy yours. In any event, it's better to know if we're interested before you waste days preparing an article that Rider can't buy.

HOW TO SUBMIT MANUSCRIPTS

Assuming that we respond with interest to your idea (please allow 8-12 weeks), your manuscript and photos should be mailed to us with an SASE (self-addressed stamped envelope) of adequate size, so we may return the materials to you if we don't accept them. Rider agrees to review all stories on speculation unless other arrangements are made by the editor.

Stories must be submitted typed or printed legibly, with margins of at least three quarters of an inch at the top and bottom of the page. Put your name, address, telephone number and—most importantly—**your e-mail address** on the first page. Each page should be numbered, and identified with your name.

Submit a copy of the story on a CD or thumb drive along with a printed copy. These days we can convert just about any file type, but when in doubt save the file as Text Only (sometimes called ASCII).

Rider does not accept extremely long stories. Even fully developed travel stories should never be longer than 1,800 words, and most merit even less length than that.

HOW TO SUBMIT PHOTOGRAPHS

Rider rarely buys articles not accompanied by photographs and vice versa. We prefer very high (7.1 megapixel and up) resolution digital images for everything. Rider will accept high-quality prints (no date stamps, please!) and certain lower-resolution digital images for some articles (see below). Please don't send us slides, dupes, slide scans, negatives, contact sheets or printouts without originals or undeveloped film, and please don't manipulate your digital images.

DIGITAL CAMERAS Any digital images you submit for feature stories must be unmanipulated .jpps or .tifs, as they came from camera, which must be a high-resolution model (7.1 megapixel and up) that produces images at least 2300 x 3000 pixels, or about 32 x 42 inches at 72 dpi. For a number of technical reasons, we discourage the use of low-resolution amateur digital cameras for any stories, but particularly those in which the photos may run larger than 5 x 7 inches. We may be able to use your digital photos for a Favorite Ride-type story or less image-heavy article (see "What Rider Does Buy" below) if the camera is a 4 megapixel model or higher and the images were made at the highest resolution and lowest compression. If in doubt, send us a sample and request verification that it will work for your story.

Photos should be properly exposed, neither light and washed-out looking nor so dark that detail is hard to make out. Be sure to write a descriptive caption of 25 words or less for each on a separate sheet, numbered so that it keys to the image filename. The caption for each photo should tell who or what is in the picture, when (if appropriate, e.g., season, time of day, special event time), where the scene is (region, state, town, highway) and, if appropriate, why the photograph is relevant to the story. Be aware of the five Ws of journalism: who, what, when, where and why.

Protect prints by packing them between two pieces of light cardboard, or sending them in mailers designed to ship prints. CDs and DVDs are often damaged when plastic jewel cases break in the mail—please protect them accordingly.

WHAT RIDER DOES NOT BUY

Rider prepares much of its own material. We do not buy road tests, riding impressions, product tests or motorcycle fix-ups, and Rider's monthly columns are assigned to our editors. Rider does not buy improperly prepared materials. We do not accept handwritten or single-spaced manuscripts, illegible typing or printing, faded photocopies or manuscripts with no margins, left, right, top or bottom. Handwritten manuscripts have to be returned unread.

Finally, Rider does not buy general material or travel material that is not specially written for motorcyclists, with the needs and wants of motorcyclists in mind.

WHAT RIDER DOES BUY

FAVORITE RIDES These are mini travel stories that require the use of a few good color photos, and about 700 to 900 words of copy. They're a nice genre to try because they are short, focused and relatively easy to write. Your comments should focus on how the route, place or destination might be of interest to a motorcyclist. Short day trips near your own home are good sources for ideas.

Don't forget the photo caption sheet, AND A ROUTE MAP of some sort for our illustrator to work from. Payment upon publication: \$200.

FULL LENGTH TOUR/TRAVEL FEATURES This type of story offers a good opportunity for prospective contributors. Invariably, the Rider travel feature requires the use of spectacular color photography and is given considerable emphasis in the magazine. Depending upon the way a travel feature is used and its quality, payment (upon publication) varies. Don't forget the photo caption sheet, AND A ROUTE MAP of some sort for our artist to work from. These stories are almost never more than 1,800 words.

OTHER TOPICS Almost anything in the world of motorcycling is fair game for Rider, but be sure to query first. Some examples: interesting old motorcycles, unusual museums or events, motorcycle achievers, stand-out motorcycle organizations and clubs.

DO'S AND DON'TS OF WRITING TRAVEL STORIES

Don't write blow-by-blow diaries filled with minute, personal details. Structure your story with an opening that makes the reader want to read more. Research your story before you write it. Think about what a fellow rider would want to know. Your article should include hotels or campgrounds in the area, key attractions and how to get to them, time of year, interesting places to eat or the dates of special regional events. You can get much of this information from state and city tourist bureaus. Make sure that all information is current, and **INCLUDE A MAP** and fact sheet pertinent to your visit.

Please don't send us history lessons or travel stories that read no differently than if the trip were made by car. Tell the reader about the roads, the riding, and about the motorcycle(s) and how they were on the ride. Stage some of your scenic photos so that they include motorcycles in them, both with and without rider(s). This may require taking a tripod along if you're traveling alone, but people in your bike and scenic photos are an important element. We only need one shot of you posed with your bike, though—try to tell the story with your photos, too!

PAYMENT AND RIGHTS

Payment for all articles and photos is upon publication, and varies from \$200 on up. Rider buys first North American serial and one-time publication rights in the magazine; i.e., the article/photo has never been published elsewhere and is guaranteed exclusively to Rider. We also reserve the right to post or archive the story or article online following publication in the magazine. **Please don't send us a query or article that has been simultaneously submitted to another publication!** Finally, we reserve the right to edit any material we accept.

Rider Magazine
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